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("R5/5/1/0 Top Secret"



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Developments in Indochina

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS	
North Vietnam is trying to get another international anti-war conference going to serve as a sounding board for Vietnamese Communist propaganda, but bickering among the proposed participants will probably result in delaying the start of the conference for several weeks.	
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Some anti-war elements still want the meeting held as originally scheduled. The secretariat of the Stockholm conference completed its arrangements for the meeting and firmly committed itself to the January date, only to discover that the North Vietnamese themselves were no longer insisting on it.	
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LAOS

Peace remained at arm's length following the 14th session of the Vientiane talks on 16 January. Neither side touched on specific negotiating points, and both were obviously awaiting word on developments relating to a Vietnam settlement. The Communists renewed last week's polemics by launching a diatribe at the US, but went lightly on Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, last week's target. For their part, the government delegates defended the Prime Minister's neutralist credentials and attacked the North Vietnamese.

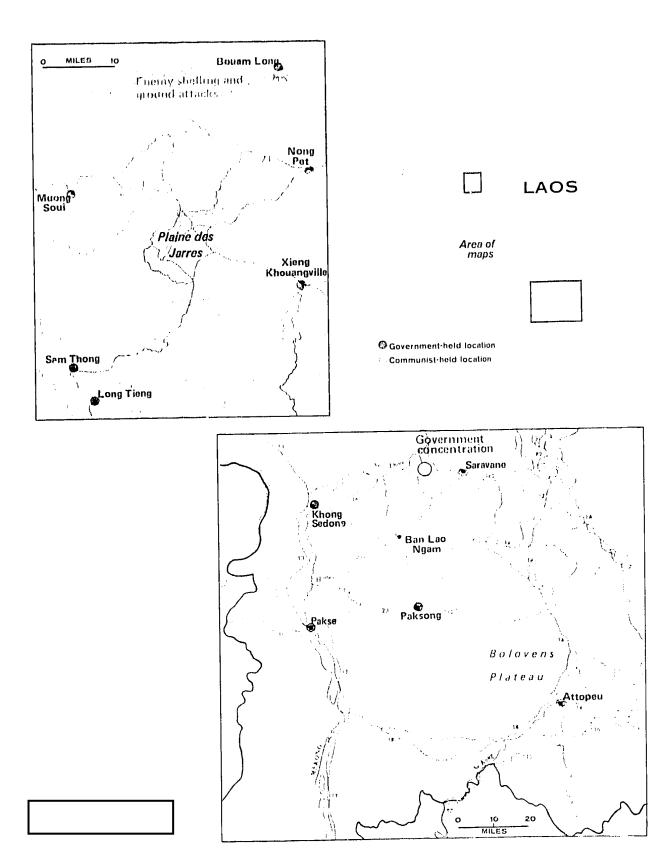
After the meeting, several Communist negotiators, including chairman Phoun Sipraseuth, left for Sam Neua saying that they would return for the next session of the talks. Two ranking negotiators who left for the Communist administrative center over a week ago are also scheduled to be aboard the return flight from Hanoi.

In a press interview on 15 January, Souvanna stated that he is optimistic about chances for a settlement in Laos once Hanoi and Washington reach agreement over Vietnam, and he said that a cease-fire in Laos would follow closely on a Vietnam cease-fire. While Souvanna rejected Communist demands for a supra-governmental political consultative council, he did say that his government might possibly appoint a tripartite or mixed body to exercise a similar function until elections could be held. Souvanna claimed that he would retire soon after these new elections.

Action at Bouam Long

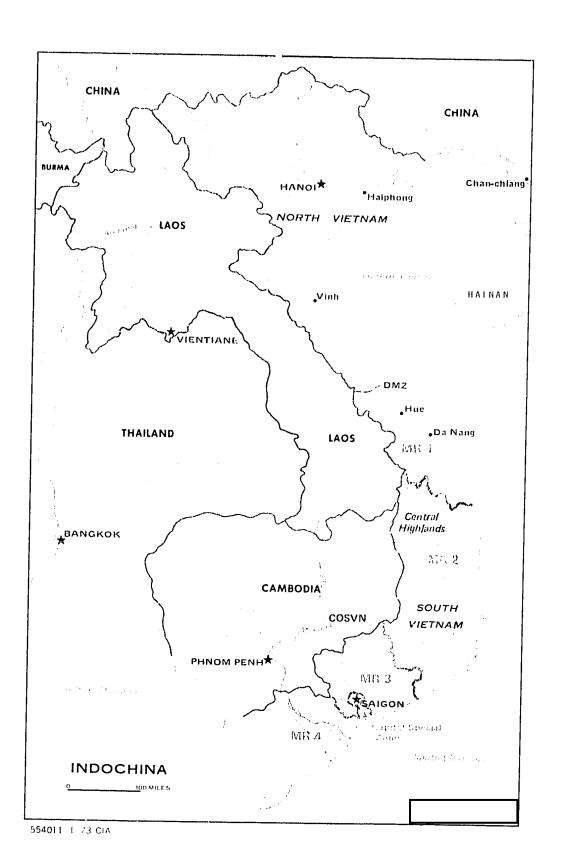
Fighting has picked up around the government stronghold at Bouam Long. According to belated reports, North Vietnamese gunners intensified their shelling of the base on 14 January, and at the same time Communist infantry troops attacked irregular

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defenders at two positions just south of Bouam Long. The shelling damaged a government artillery emplace- ment, but the irregulars beat off the ground attacks.	25X1
Ante Raised at Saravane	
Government commanders have sent a 900-man ir- regular unit to bolster the force that retreated from Saravane last week. Some 3,000 Lao Army and irregular troops are now in the Se Done Valley, west of the provincial capital.	
Despite continued heavy air strikes, the Commu- nists are maintaining a large force near Saravane.	
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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The North Vietnamese continue to move tank and artillery units toward South Vietnam, and another resupply "offensive" is under way.

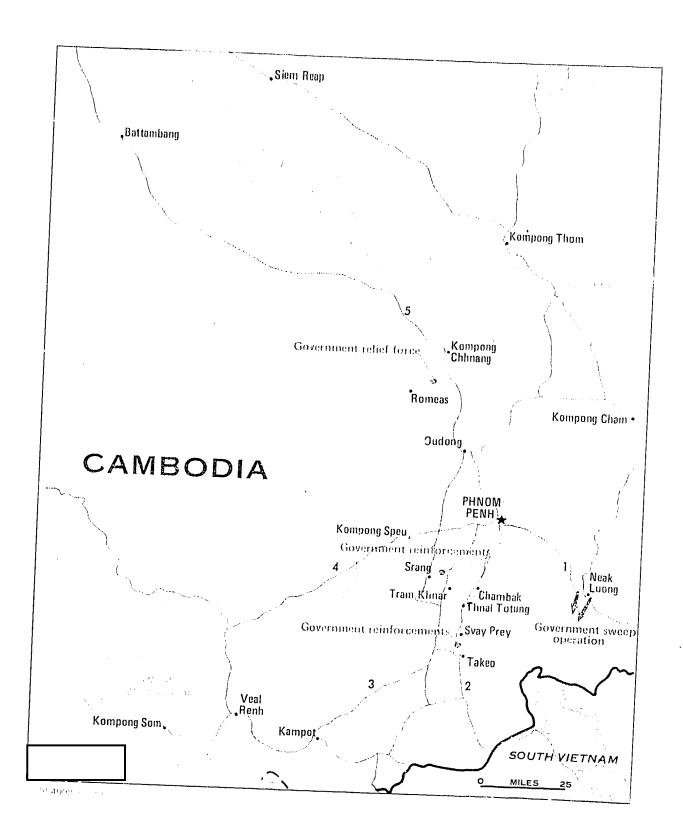
Over 200 tanks, most of them apparently in integral units, and large quantities of artillery are moving through the Laos Panhandle. The first tanks began moving south in October and are spread from southern North Vietnam to as far south as southern Laos, with the largest concentrations in the central and southern Laos Panhandle. These tanks are known to be destined for COSVN, the central highlands of South Vietnam, and other areas in the northern part of the country. More tanks apparently are being sent to these areas than in the previous dry season.

Large quantities of supplies also are moving	
through the Laos Panhandle.	

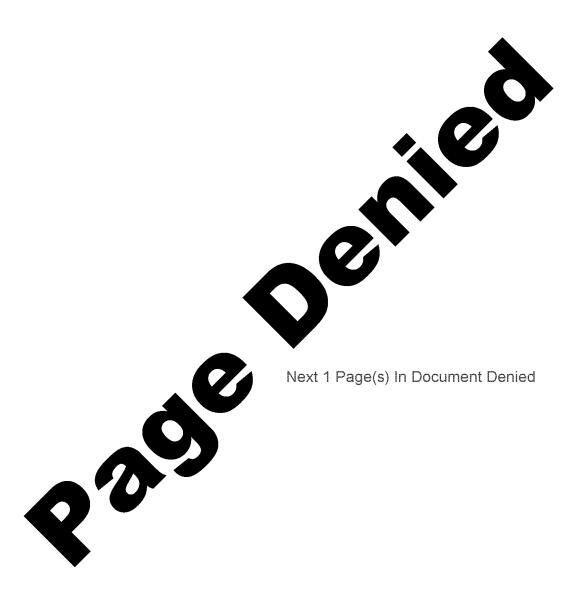
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<u>CAMBODIA</u>	
The government's effort to restore its defenses along the Mekong River below Neak Luong is progressing well in the face of only light opposition. The advance of Cambodian units along both banks of the river has been slowed primarily by the need to reestablish a troop presence at each abandoned position. Regular Cambodian Army troops will fill these positions until territorial forces can be reorganized. In the Route 1 sector, most government forces along the highway have returned to Neak Luong for refitting.	
No significant changes in the military situation south of Phnom Penh have been reported in the past 24 hours. Government reinforcements on Route 2 that are trying to converge on the villages of Thnal Totung and Svay Prey are still meeting some opposition along that highway. To the west of Route 3, other government reinforcements attempting to move into the village of Srang also have been halted by harassing attacks.	
Northwest of Phnom Penh, the three government battalions advancing toward the embattled Cambodian garrison at Romeas have been joined by most of the Route 5 reserve force based between Oudong and Kompong Chhnang.	25 X 1
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NORTH VIETNAM

North Vietnam's leaders have made conspicuous public appearances in Hanoi in recent days, apparently to show a solid front in the presence of fresh rumors in the international arena on the likelihood of a cease-fire in Vietnam. The appearances have included First Party Secretary Le Duan, Premier Pham Van Dong, National Assembly Chairman Truong Chinh, Defense Minister Giap, and other notables.

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